

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

PUTTING WEATHER REPORTS TO WORK

FEB 11 1931

A radio talk by Arthur J. DeMars, meteorologist, Weather Bureau, delivered through Station WRC and 39 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, February 10, 1931.

The last time I spoke to you I told you how cold wave and frost warnings were put to work. Today I am going to say a few words on how cold wave warnings and warnings of hot weather are incorporated into shippers forecasts. As you all know, a large portion of the shipments made by railway and transportation companies are perishable consignments. These consignments are protected against extremes of heat and cold by icing, heating or special packing as conditions prevailing at the time may require. In order that you may have fresh fruits, vegetables and meats, the meat packers and the transportation companies make continued use of temperature forecasts to protect their shipments.

Oftentimes when unfavorable temperature conditions are expected, shipments of perishable goods are speeded to their destinations when delivery is possible before the arrival of damaging temperature conditions. When extremely cold weather overtakes perishable shipments enroute, the shipments are run into round-houses for protection, and again, shipments are hold up until after a freeze has passed if it is not possible to protect the goods while in transit.

It is often necessary to protect some shipments from temperature changes within comparatively narrow limits. An example of this is given in the case of bananas. This fruit requires very careful handling and must be kept at a temperature of 53 to 65 degrees during shipment, as a temperature below 55 degrees chills the fruit sufficiently to cause a deterioration in quality while a temperature above 65 degrees inside the car will produce overripening. Some companies have men stationed in various parts of the country through which their shipments pass. When near freezing weather is expected over any portion of these routes, these men look after the heaters in the cars to keep them at the desired temperature. Similar precautions are taken by shippers of vegetables, eggs, and other perishable products.

Most meats are best shipped in cold weather, although the use of refrigerator cars prevents loss, a saving of ice is made by shipping in cold weather.

Shipping live hogs and cattle by freight is avoided, if possible, when a hot wave is expected; and in making shipments of fish and oysters in hot weather special consideration must be made as to the amount of ice to be used in the cars, as not enough ice would allow the goods to spoil and too much ice would, of course, be an unnecessary expense. In this connection I might say that on some railroads, freight-cars are not heated,

(over)

regardless of the nature of the contents, unless the Weather Bureau's forecasts for shippers indicate temperatures below freezing. Before such forecasts were available, the railroads frequently heated cars unnecessarily.

Large wholesale grocery concerns determine from the shippers forecasts whether or not they should offer perishable or semi-perishable consignments to the carriers; on the other hand, the carriers pay close attention to the shippers forecasts and are frequently guided by them in determining whether or not perishable products shall be accepted for shipment because of liability should damage occur.

Nearly all classes of fruits and vegetables are damaged by freezing or near freezing temperatures. Potatoes are very susceptible to being damaged by low temperatures while in transit. You all know of how much use a frozen potato is to you, and again no one will buy potatoes that are partly rotted. This latter condition is sometimes caused by loading potatoes while they are rather cold, then when the temperature rises a sweating process sets in and the potatoes start rotting. Consequently potato shippers pay close attention to the weather forecast issued especially for shippers of perishable products. To a greater or less extent the same is true of growers and shippers of carrots, onions, brussels-sprouts, apples, oranges and other vegetables and fruits. There are also other types of shipments that cannot be made safely during freezing weather such as ink, soda and mineral waters, and bottled foods, canned goods, and others too numerous to mention at this time.

The next time that I talk to you I will tell you about spraying, harvest-weather, and fruit drying forecasts and how they are put to work.